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McCollum wants Sabo's seat on appropriations panel

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., is seeking a seat on the House Appropriations Committee being vacated by fellow Democrat Martin Sabo, who has announced his intention to retire from Congress at the end of this year.

McCollum, a third-term congresswoman from St. Paul, made the pitch to House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi in a letter obtained Thursday by the Star Tribune.

Her appointment to the panel, McCollum wrote, would "allow for continued representation from the Midwest region on the committee."

During his 28 years in Congress, Sabo used the spending committee to land a variety of large infrastructure and transportation projects in his district, the largest being the new light-rail transit line between the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and downtown Minneapolis.

McCollum, a member of the Education and International Relations committees, has expressed interest in the Appropriations Committee before.

McCollum's letter, dated Monday -- two days after Sabo announced his plans to retire -- represents her first explicit attempt to employ Pelosi's support. But McCollum vowed not to actively campaign for the seat within the Democratic caucus until after November's congressional elections.

A spokeswoman for Pelosi's office had no immediate comment Thursday.

KEVIN DIAZ

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